Jno Bassnett 1768
A Sermon given by Mr

Mr. *Symmes's*

Thanksgiving SERMON.

December 1st, 1768.

BRITISH MUSEUM

12/-

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED

At ANDOVER, *December* 1ſt, 1768.

ON THE

Public THANKSGIVING

In the *Maſſachuſetts-Bay.*

BY

WILLIAM SYMMES, M. A.

PASTOR of the Firſt CHURCH in *Andover.*

SALEM:

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PSALM LXXVIII, 1——4.

GIVE ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I WILL open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark ſayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

WE will not hide them from their children, ſhewing to the generation to come, the praiſes of the Lord; and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

THE inſpired penman of this pſalm, gives a ſummary account of the moſt remarkable paſſages which occur, in the hiſtory of the church and nation of the Jews, from their coming out of Egypt, until the time that God choſe Zion for the ſpecial place of his worſhip, and anointed David to be King over his diſtinguiſhed favorite people. This abridgment of ſacred hiſtory is drawn up in a divine ſong, that it might be more ſtrongly held in memory by the riſing generation and their poſterity, for whoſe benefit it ſeems to have been peculiarly intended.

As God of old had commanded his people * to *take heed* to themſelves, and *keep their ſouls diligently, leſt they ſhould forget the things which their eyes had ſeen*, and ſuffer them to *depart from their heart*; ſo he commanded them likewiſe to *teach* theſe things diligently to their children and children's children. And in purſuance of this divine injunction, the pſalmiſt recapitulates the glorious and praiſe-worthy acts of the Lord: Wherein might be ſeen his love, forbearance and long-ſuffering, towards an unbelieving, ungrateful and obſtinate people; as well as his holy diſpleaſure againſt their ſins. God had manifeſted

* Deut. iv. 9.

feſted his favour to their progenitors, in numberleſs inſtances, and in great and marvellous works. Theſe works of wonder were to be thankfully recollected by the preſent generation, and carefully tranſmitted to ſucceeding ones—*That the generation to come might know them, even the children which ſhall be born; who ſhall ariſe and declare them to their children; that they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments—And might not be as their fathers, a ſtubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that ſet not their heart aright, and whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God.*

THUS it being the manifeſt deſign and intention of the devout pſalmiſt, to remind the Jewiſh church and nation, of God's mighty acts of power and mercy which he made known to their progenitors; that they and their poſterity might learn gratitude and fidelity to their unwearied benefactor: We ſhall act in conformity to the pious example here ſet us, and to the deſign of this anniverſary ſolemnity, if with correſpondent affections we improve the preſent opportunity:—In recollecting the moſt remarkable inſtances of God's providential goodneſs to our native land; and in conſidering the manner in which we ſhould commemorate the wonderful works that he hath wrought for us. Let me then beſpeak your attention whilſt I endeavour,

FIRST, To remind you of ſome of the moſt remarkable paſſages of God's providential goodneſs to our native land: *Which we have heard, known, and our fathers have told us*; and which we may *not hide from* our *children, ſhewing to the generation to come the praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

AMERICA received its name from Americus Veſputius, a Florentine. But the honor of diſcovering this vaſt continent is generally given to Columbus, a Genoeſe; who explored theſe new regions about the beginning of the 15th century. In this century further diſcoveries were made, by perſons of different nations. And in the beginning

of

of the next, Capt. Goſnold, an Engliſhman, landed firſt on the Eaſtern Coaſt; from whence he ſailed ſouthward to Cape-Cod, which received its name from him.

At this time the whole country from Florida to the Bay of Fundy, was called Virginia.

In 1606, it was divided into two colonies, the ſouthern and northern; and granted to diſtinct companies of merchants in London and Plimouth. And about eight years after, the northern colony obtained the name of New-England.

Several attempts were made to ſettle this country both by the Engliſh and French, merely from mercenary views; but they all proved unſucceſsful till 1620, when a number of reſolved Chriſtians, in order to enjoy a worſhip purely ſcriptural, and leave the ſame to their poſterity, made an effectual ſettlement at Plimouth.

These ſelf-denied diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, were part of a church under the paſtoral care of Mr. John Robinſon. This worthy miniſter and his church choſe to leave their native country, rather than offer violence to their conſciences, by complying with the terms of conformity inſiſted on by the eſtabliſhed church. And being drove out of England, they ſought an aſylum, from the ſtorm of perſecution, in Holland; where they approved themſelves to all that knew them, *by a converſation becoming the goſpel of Chriſt.*

But after they had reſided ſeveral years among the Dutch, they began to think of removing to ſome other place, where their children would be leſs expoſed to temptations, and more likely to *continue in the things which* they had *learned.* They choſe to live under the Engliſh government, if they might enjoy without moleſtation the benefits of religious freedom; which, of all others, they eſteemed moſt valuable. The intolerant ſpirit which the King † and Biſhops diſcovered towards nonconformiſts, of every denomination, forbad their return to England, with any proſpect of being allowed the free ex-

† James the firſt.

erciſe

ercife of thofe advantages, which they eſteemed neceſſary to promote their eternal welfare! And where could they enjoy this freedom, and the happineſs of living under the Engliſh government, but in the wilds of America?

The King was petitioned to grant them liberty in religion under the great ſeal: This he refuſed to do, tho' at the ſame time he indulged Papiſts in the free exerciſe of their religion, in every part of his empire. And all that could be obtained from him, was a promiſe that he would not moleſt them.

It was a dark day in England when they left it. Nor was the proſpect much leſs gloomy and diſcouraging, when they arrived in Cape-Cod harbour.* A feeble company, without any proſpect of human ſuccour, the neareſt Engliſh plantation being 500 miles diſtant from them—A cold winter advancing—The ſword of the wilderneſs already drawn againſt the Europeans—A more commodious place for ſettlement to be ſought for, and ſhelters to be erected to ſcreen them from the rigor of the weather. Tho' they had been enur'd to difficulties in a ſtrange land, yet their preſent circumſtances muſt have been peculiarly trying and diſcouraging. And indeed, the many and great hardſhips, which they endured, laid the foundation for thoſe diſeaſes which in a few months proved mortal to half the company. But notwithſtanding this great mortality among them, thoſe that remained made the firſt effectual ſettlement in New-England, and opened the way for the following colonies.

In 1625 King James the firſt died, and was ſucceeded by his only ſon, Charles the firſt, who married a French Papiſt, by whom he had two ſons—They likewiſe married Papiſts, when in their turns they aſcended the Britiſh throne.

In the reign of Charles the firſt, all further hope of

* Nov. 11th, 1620, 101 arrived in Cape-Cod harbour, and Dec. 25th they began to erect the firſt houſe in Plimouth.

reformation

reformation and indulgence was taken away. Conformity was more zealouſly preſſed by the Biſhops—Taxes were levied upon the ſubjects, without the authority of parliament—Illegal and enormous fines were exacted from ſome—And others were unjuſtly condemned to cruel puniſhments. Thus the heat of perſecution encreaſing, a number, for the ſake of pure undefiled Chriſtianity, reſolved to attempt the ſettlement of another colony in this new world. And in 1628 ſome of them arrived at Naumkeak (now Salem*) and were followed the next year by the principal perſons belonging to the company; among whom were Mr. Higginſon and Mr. Skelton, the firſt miniſters in that town. The ſame year part of theſe adventurers removed to Charleſtown; and in the beginning of the next, the Governor and Aſſiſtants ſettled at Boſton.

The troubles of the non-conformiſts daily increaſed in England. They ſaw the *place of judgment*, that wickedneſs was *there*; *and the place of righteouſneſs, that iniquity was there.* A furious and bigoted prelate, † in high favour with his ſovereign, and a mortal foe to puritans, governed without a rival in church and ſtate: Great numbers who could no longer live in quiet in their native land, came over into New-England. And in the year 1643 the Maſſachuſetts colony had ſo increaſed that it was divided into four counties. The county of Eſſex conſiſted of eight towns or ſettlements. Andover was one of the eight, and was then known by its Indian name Chochichawick, which it retained till 1646, when it took the name of Andover. 'Tis uncertain in what year the firſt ſettlements, were made in this town. But as it was bounded upon Rowley, which was ſettled in 1638, and a miniſter ordained in it in 1644; 'tis probable a ſettlement was begun in Andover about the year 1640.

Dr. Mather giving ſome account of Mr. John Woodbridge, ſays, "The town of Andover then firſt peeping

* Said to be called ſo in alluſion to Pſalm lxxvi. 2. † Archbiſhop Laud.

into the world, he was by the hands of Mr. Willſon and Mr. Worceſter, Sept. 16, 1644, ordained the teacher of the congregation there." He continued in the miniſtry here about three years; and then returned to England, reſigning his paſtoral relation to the people of Andover, in favour of Mr. Francis Dean, who ſucceeded him as their miniſter. Neither of theſe gentlemen had received the honors of the Univerſity in England, when they left it to accompany their friends into this country; where their education for the miniſtry was perfected. And there is a tradition that Mr. Woodbridge was the firſt (ſtrictly ſpeaking) that was ordained a miniſter of the goſpel in this county, and the ſecond in New-England.

THE age of the town of Andover is about 128 years, and it has been in a church ſtate 124 years laſt September. And ſurely it is time for us (and there is a peculiar propriety in doing it on this anniverſary ſolemnity) to ſet up our Ebenezer and ſay, *hitherto the Lord hath helped us.* Let every thankful heart erect its own private memorials, to the God of our lives. And may the people of New-England unite in bleſſing God, *who hath not turned away our prayer, nor his mercy from us!* How wonderfully did God plant our anceſtors in this land at firſt! How wonderfully did he preſerve and provide for them. He *bore them as on eagle's wings—To the praiſe of the glory of his grace,* they were patient in want, and reſigned in trouble. They *enquired after God their maker, who gives ſongs in the night—Unto God* did they *ſeek*, and *commit* their *cauſe*; and he remarkably owned their undertaking—In *ſix troubles* he *delivered them, yea in ſeven the evil touched them not.*

THIS ſketch of their hiſtory may ſerve to raiſe our notes of praiſe, and prepare us to attend to thoſe grand events, which either gave riſe to the colonies, or did more immediately affect their ſettlement and growth.

SOME foundation principles of the reformation, were firſt

firſt openly eſpouſed in England, by the famous Wicklif: But the actual ſeparation from the Roman See, did not take place till the reign of Henry the VIIIth; who exerted himſelf in bringing it about, not ſo much perhaps from reformation principles, as from lucrative and revengeful motives. But be this as it will, God was pleaſed to eſtabliſh the reformation ſo firmly in England, that its inveterate enemies have never been able to overthrow it. However, many bold and daring attempts have been made by the bigots of Rome, to reduce Great-Britain to its former ſtate of ignorance, and abject ſlavery to the dictates of the Roman Pontiff.

In the reign of Queen Mary, popery, in all its dreadful forms, aſſumed the imperial throne of Great-Britain.—"And as popery and arbitrary power, like two ſiſter furies, go hand in hand; ſo wherever they fix their ſeat, they ſpread deſolation around them." Thus it was in this ſhort but bloody reign, in which it is ſaid that there were burned "five biſhops; one and twenty divines; eight gentlemen; eighty-four artificers; one hundred huſbandmen, ſervants and labourers; twenty-ſix wives; twenty widows; nine unmarried women; two boys, and two infants." And had her reign been long in proportion to the barbarity of it, words would not eaſily be able to expreſs the miſeries of her proteſtant ſubjects. But God who *pleadeth the cauſe of his people*, was pleaſed to cut her off in the midſt of her days, and to bring to the throne the princeſs Elizabeth; under whoſe happy government the reformation was greatly promoted and ſtrengthened. Her attachment to the proteſtant cauſe, procured her many enemies both at home and abroad. Popery, ever reſtleſs and enterprizing, prompted the King of Spain to an iniquitous and deſperate invaſion of her dominions. And as if the *battle* was always to the *ſtrong*, the Spaniſh fleet was preſumptuouſly called the invincible armada. But the ſupreme potentate, who *rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will, confounded the de-*

vices

vices of her enemies, *and put them to open ſhame. His glory was great in her ſalvation*—This formidable fleet was retarded in its enterprize by adverſe winds, diminiſhed by ſtorms, and at laſt defeated and deſtroyed in the Britiſh channel.

In the ſucceeding reign a plot was laid by the papiſts, to blow up the principals of the three eſtates of England; but thro' God's great goodneſs it was diſcovered the very day it was to have been executed, viz. Nov. 5th, 1605. Had they ſucceeded in their deteſtable deſigns, the Britiſh parliament had been no more—The greateſt bulwark againſt the oppreſſive, and deeply galling yoke of popery and tyranny, had been removed—And ignorance, bigotry, and perſecution had perhaps again overſhadowed and diſgraced the land. But God whenever he *pleaſes, maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* The plot muſt be diſcovered, and New-England ſettled chiefly by ſuch a ſort of people againſt whom it was levelled; who ſhould *ſhew to the generation to come the praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

Very formidable attempts were made againſt our civil and religious liberties, in the two next reigns. In that of Charles the firſt, the prerogative was made the inſtrument of much oppreſſion and tyranny. But Charles the ſecond raiſed it to a ſtill greater height. By gaining an undue aſcendency over the parliament, *his little finger became thicker than his father's loins.* Thoſe who proteſted againſt the frequent violations of the undoubted rights of the ſubjects in the preceeding reign, were impriſoned; but in this, ſome of the worthieſt patriots in the kingdom were by unjuſt accuſations brought to execution. And the ſevere act of uniformity in religion paſſed in this reign, ſilenced in one day above two thouſand miniſters, who left their places in the church for the ſake of preſerving an undefiled conſcience. †

† "As remarkable an example of a great number of men acting upon principle, as perhaps any that can be produced ſince the firſt golden age of chriſtianity."

King

KING James the ſecond ſucceeded his brother, and in a ſhort time drove matters to extremity. "He was from education and principle, a determined foe to the rights of mankind, both civil and ſacred. And the ſhort period of his government, was little elſe than a violation of law, juſtice, reaſon and humanity." Had he gone on without controul, the antient government would have been totally ſubverted. His ſubjects would have had no ſecurity of property or life—The light which leads to heaven, would have been taken away—And our fathers been reduced to the dreadful alternative, either of ſubmitting to the abſurdities and iniquities of popery, or of ſuffering its horrible cruelties. They had denied themſelves of their eaſe, and riſked their eſtates and lives for the peaceable and quiet enjoyment of the goſpel; and what horror muſt have taken hold on them, when they beheld the Roman ſuperſtition, advancing with its natural attendants of inquiſitors, ſtakes and gibbets. But he who *changeth the times and the ſeaſons*; *who removeth Kings and ſetteth up Kings*; had mercy in ſtore for Britain and America. God raiſed up a deliverer in the Prince of Orange, who freed the people from the claims of prerogative, and confirmed and ſolidly eſtabliſhed their privileges.

THE revolution, replete with happineſs to Old and New-England in general, was on ſome accounts a peculiarly favourable event to the Maſſachuſetts colony. The people had ſeized the Governor, * who had kept pace with his maſter in his advances towards deſpotiſm. The lives of the principal actors, and the freedom of all the inhabitants from ſtill greater oppreſſions, depended on the ſucceſs of the Prince's undertaking. God proſpered his noble and generous attempt, to deliver millions of his fellow creatures, who were groaning under intolerable burdens. And the news of the crown's being transferred to William and Mary, was the moſt joyful that New-England had ever received. The fears of the people vaniſhed—The Governor, who had rendered himſelf hateful

* Sir Edmund Andros.

hateful by his innumerable extortions and abuſes, was removed—And King William the third, of bleſſed Memory, lived to eſtabliſh the Hanover ſucceſſion.

The partizans of the Stuart family, were never cordial friends to the deliverer of the nation, nor to the preſent eſtabliſhment. This party diſcovered itſelf in this and the following reign †, by frequent plots and conſpiracies—But in the ſucceeding one,* it broke out into open rebellion, which was quelled by the battles of Preſton and Dumblain. But neither did the Pretender relinquiſh his claims, nor the jacobite party drop their old prejudices againſt the proteſtant ſucceſſion.

In the reign of his late Majeſty King George II. another rebellion broke out in Scotland; which produced greater diſorder than the former, and threatened a more fatal event to the nation. The ſon of the Pretender, inſtigated and aſſiſted by France, landed in Scotland—Raiſed an army, and garriſoned ſome of the principal towns,—In one battle he was victorious—in another not beaten—At length he advanced into the very heart of England, at the head of rebellious troops. They had *taken evil counſel* againſt the Britiſh Monarch, now with a great part of the national troops in Flanders. *But ſaith the Lord God*, (as appears by the event) *it ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs.* Whilſt the infatuated *ſon of Tabeal* delayed to improve his advantages, the King and army returned ſafe to London, and the rebels were defeated the 16th day of April, 1746. Here then is another happy event, for which we ſhould ſhew to the *generation to come the praiſes of the Lord.*

The intereſts of Britain and America being eſſentially the ſame, the deliverances wrought for our parent country, ought to be conſidered as wrought for us alſo. But beſides thoſe grand events, ſome of which greatly affected the ſtate of things in this country; *we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us* of other interpoſitions of divine providence more immediately in our favour.

† Queen Ann's. * George the firſt.

The

THE firſt ſettlers of this happy country, patiently endured ſuch hardſhips, for the ſake of religion and conſcience, as would have been inſupportable on any other principles. By very wonderful diſpenſations of providence, God brought them into this land, and beſtowed upon them many precious privileges, both of a temporal and ſpiritual nature! And how wonderfully did he prepare the way for their reception, by ſuffering the peſtilence (a few years before) to make great deſtruction among the natives, inhabiting thoſe places where the firſt Engliſh ſettlements were made. The Engliſh, though often alarmed, lived many years in peace with the neighbouring Indians. But at length, Philip an Indian Sachem, bordering on the colony of Plimouth, took effectual meaſures to engage many other tribes of Indians in a war with the Engliſh, which ended in his own deſtruction. † In this war, many Engliſh ſettlements were entirely broke up; and all the expoſed plantations had more or leſs miſchief done in them. Andover * had but a taſte of that bitter cup, of which many other expoſed ſettlements drank deep. This was a bloody war, and the fate of the colonies was ſome time doubtful and uncertain—Supplications were made for them in divers counties in England. And theſe diſtreſſed churches united in calling upon God in their trouble, and he *was entreated of them*, and cauſed them for ſome time to [illegible] *from their enemies.*

BUT in 1688 the Indians commenced another war with the Engliſh; and *the ſword of the enemy, and fear* was again *on every ſide.* Andover ſuffered more in this, than in the preceeding war. A ſmall party of the enemy

† The Pequod war was before this, in 1636---This tribe of Indians lived within the bounds of Connecticut colony; and the war being carried into their own country, they were in a ſhort ſpace wholly extinguiſhed.

* In the beginning of April 1676, Mr. Ephraim Stevens diſcovered the enemy about a mile this ſide Bodwell's ferry; but eſcaped upon his horſe and alarmed the inhabitants. The Indians purſued, and paſſed along the main road, without doing any miſchief, till they came into the ſouth part of the town, where they killed Mr. Joſeph Abbot, and took Mr. Timothy Abbot. A few months after a ſmall party of the enemy ſurprized and captivated Mr. Hagget and two of his ſons.

about

about the year 1694, killed two men * in the ſouth part of the town. But the inhabitants had never ſeen ſuch a day as the 22d of February, 1698, when betwixt 30 and 40 Indians ſurpriſed the town—killed five perſons †—burnt two houſes and two barns with the cattle in them—ſet another dwelling-houſe and the meeting-houſe on fire; but the fires were happily extinguiſhed before they had done much damage. They took Col. Bradſtreet and his family, and carried them about 50 rods from his houſe, where they halted and diſmiſſed their priſoners without offering any injury to them. A ſingular inſtance of mercy in a people who had always ſhewn themſelves to be *cruel*, and to *have no mercy*. ‡

Some ſettlements often ſuffered, and others were broken up—multitudes periſhed by the ſword of the wilderneſs, and many were carried into captivity, ſome of whom underwent the moſt cruel tortures.

Often were our anceſtors either in immediate want of bread, or threatened with ſcarcity; but the mercy of heaven always interpoſed for their relief. They were a godly, praying people, and ſometimes *while they were yet ſpeaking, God would hear them.*

But among the wonderful things which God has done for New-England, there are two inſtances of his providential goodneſs towards us, which deſerve ſpecial notice—The deſtruction of Duke d'Anville's fleet, and the reduction of Canada. The latter while in the hands of the

* Mr. William Peters, and Mr. —— Hoyt.

† Simon Wade, Nathan Brown, Penelope Johnſon, and Capt. Chubb and his wife.-----Chubb had been captain of Pemaquid fort; "and his death afforded as much joy to the Indians as the deſtruction of a whole town; becauſe they had taken (tho' by accident) their beloved vengeance of him, for his barbarity and perfidy to their countrymen."

‡ The tradition is, that one Waternummon, an Indian, who had lived at Newbury, and is ſuppoſed to have had a particular regard for Col. Bradſtreet, undertook to conduct the Indians to his houſe upon theſe conditions, that they ſhould neither kill nor captivate any of his family.

The ſnow being uncommonly deep, and the inhabitants unprovided with ſnow-ſhoes, the Indians were not purſued.

Aſſacombuit, their principal leader, had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in this war by his horrid barbarities; which renders their conduct in releaſing the captives the more extraordinary.

French

French was a ſore ſcourge to the Engliſh colonies, eſpecially to the Maſſachuſetts. The French were better acquainted with the Indians than the Engliſh, and ſtuck at no meaſures that tended to bring theſe barbarians upon us. And to them we may juſtly aſcribe almoſt all our Indian wars, at leaſt their continuance. But *bleſſed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth—Our ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowlers—The ſnare* which the Tyrant * of France laid for us *is broken, and we are eſcaped.* The conqueſt of Canada, viewed in all its circumſtances, was a moſt illuſtrious and happy event. Our progenitors made ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts to reduce its capital, and earneſtly deſired to ſee the day which we behold, but ſaw it not. And ſurely ſo ſignal a favour ought to be had in everlaſting remembrance by their poſterity, to the glory of God.

But if God by his immediate power accompliſhes deliverance for his people, it redounds ſo much the more to his glory. In 1745 he was pleaſed to honor the New-England forces with the reduction of Louiſbourg; but the next year when threatened with an invaſion, we could only *ſtand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of God.*

The French, filled with a ſpirit of revenge againſt New-England for the loſs of Louiſbourg, fitted out and ſent a grand armada againſt us, conſiſting of 70 ſail, 14 of which were capital ſhips, with eight thouſand troops, and arms and ammunition for thoſe who were expected to join them in America. † We were ignorant of the deſtination of this fleet, till it was ſuppoſed to have arrived in Chibucto harbour. The Engliſh men of war in theſe ſeas were far from being a match for ſuch a force; nor were our ſea-port towns in a capacity to defend themſelves againſt it! How great was our conſternation.—Both reaſon and religion required, that we ſhould take all proper meaſures for our defence. But after all the

* Lewis XIV.

† There are two other accounts of this armament, one of which increaſes, the other leſſens it.

preparations we could make for our ſecurity, the prayer of Johoſhaphat in his diſtreſs never better became a profeſſing people—*We have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.** In this critical time, † *God aroſe and ſcattered our enemies.* His favorable providence was a wall of ſecurity and defence around us. He *rode upon the heavens in our help, and in his excellency on the ſky.* The French fleet was greatly weakened by mortal diſeaſes, and ſo broken, diſperſed and deſtroyed by repeated ſtorms, that but very few of them ever returned home. Surely (may New-England ſay) *there is no inchantment againſt Jacob, neither is there divination againſt Iſrael; according to this time it ſhall be ſaid of Jacob and of Iſrael, what* had God wrought. ‡

THESE (my hearers) are ſome of the many praiſe-worthy acts of the Lord, *which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us*—Let us *not hide them from our children*, but *ſhew the generation to come the praiſes of the Lord and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.* I now go on to conſider

SECONDLY, In what manner we ſhould commemorate, the wonderful works which God hath wrought for us.

BUT *who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can ſhew forth all his praiſe?* God's goodneſs and mercy appearing in his mighty acts are incomprehenſibly great; and we cannot acknowledge and celebrate them, in a manner becoming his nature and tranſcendant excellencies. However we muſt neither by the greatneſs of the work, nor by our own infirmities and unworthineſs, be diſcouraged from attempting our duty, when we are called

* 2d Chron. xx. 12.

† There was another invaſion of New-England attempted by France in 1697, which (conſidering the weak and defenceleſs ſtate of the colonies at that time) ſeems to have threatened equal danger to them.---The French fleet conſiſted of 10 men of war, and 3 ſmaller veſſels---they had orders to ſail to Penobſcot---to give the Governor of Canada notice of their arrival, who was to join them with 1500 men---then they were to proceed to Boſton, and lay waſte the Colonies. But the ſalvation of God was nigh to our land, and he turned his hand againſt our adverſaries.

‡ Numb. xxiii. 23.

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to do it, as well as we are able. Let us then in the

First place, commemorate the wonderful works which God hath wrought for us, with the moſt ardent gratitude to our great deliverer and unwearied benefactor.

God hath often delivered Old and New-England, from their fears and dangers, in a very ſignal manner. Since the reformation ſome have been continually plotting and contriving againſt the government, and the proteſtant reformed religion. They have digged deep, acted in the dark, and managed their deſigns with the greateſt ſecrecy and policy. And whence is it that the people of God have cauſe to rejoice, in the deliverances and ſalvations which have been wrought for them, one time after another, to this day—Verily 'tis becauſe *the Lord reigneth*—His watchful eye hath ſeen and obſerved, the enemies of our conſtitution and liberties—He has from time to time detected, and in his governing providence, circumvented and defeated them. And the people of New-England are able to look back upon merciful deliverances, wrought for them when ſeemingly brought to the brink of ruin. Many a time hath the *Lord ſaved them, by a great deliverance.*

Now theſe are acts of favour, wherein God hath diſplayed his divine perfections before us, and they ought to be recollected by us with the higheſt thankfulneſs.—Special favours demand correſpondent returns. And not to be thankful for the mercies of heaven, is in God's account to forget them. O let us then with devout praiſes and thankſgivings to him *who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will*, bear in mind thoſe grand events which preſerved, ſecured and ſtrengthened the Britiſh conſtitution—which delivered us from the tyranny of deſpotic power, and from the cruelties and horrors of popery—and which eſtabliſhed the proteſtant ſucceſſion in the family of HANOVER, ſo favourable to our civil rights and religious liberties. Let us bleſs God who has ſo remarkably favoured the proteſtant

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cauſe; ſo mercifully accompliſhed his promiſe, that *the gates of hell ſhould not prevail againſt his church*; and bro't ſo much good, out of the evil, abſurdity and iniquity, of perſecution. The glorious privileges which we enjoy, were tranſmitted to us by the blood, of *thoſe who were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held.* Our religion and liberties, the ſecurity of our perſons and property, the quiet poſſeſſion of a good land, and the proſpect of tranſmitting to poſterity the bleſſings which we enjoy; ſhould endear to us the memory of thoſe, through whoſe inſtrumentality theſe favours have been conveyed to us. But above all, we ſhould acknowledge them in religious and ſolemn thankſgiving, to the great Superintendant of the univerſe, who hath diſtinguiſhed us by his favours. Let us remember the words of the pſalmiſt, and not only remember them, but ſpeak them, and live up to them. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Who remembered us in our low eſtate; for his mercy endureth forever. And hath redeemed us from our enemies; for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven; for his mercy endureth forever.* And let us diſcharge this duty of praiſe and thankſgiving, with due regard to a glorious Chriſt, according to that direction of the Apoſtle*—*By him let us offer the ſacrifices of praiſe to God continually*; that is, *the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.*

SECONDLY, Theſe great and happy events ſhould be ſo commemorated by us, as that God may have all the glory of *his wonderful works that he hath done.*

NOT unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praiſe. The glory of all our deliverances, is to be aſcribed to God moſt high. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, now may* the New-Engliſh *Iſrael ſay; if it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us; then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didſt*

* Heb. xiii. 15.

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in their days, in the times of old. How thou didſt drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedſt them; how thou didſt afflict the people, and caſt them out. For they got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them. Our God hath done whatſoever he pleaſed: The Lord hath been mindful of us; and we will bleſs the Lord from this time forth and forever.

THIRDLY, Has God done ſo great things for our progenitors and for us; let us then in the practice of our duty, firmly rely on his protection and mercy for the future. The deliverances which God wrought for his antient people, are recapitulated in our context, that the preſent and ſucceeding generations *might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.* ‖ The ſame wiſe, powerful and good providence of God, which is the foundation of our gratitude for deliverances in times paſt, is equally ſo for our truſt and confidence in his protection and care for ſucceeding times. This is the uſe which we are taught to make, of God's mighty acts of power and mercy ſhewn to his people—*The Lord hath delivered, and doth deliver, in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver.* * 'Tis indeed a dark day with New-England, and ſo it was with God's antient people; when the pſalmiſt reflecting upon their diſtreſſes, at firſt gave way to melancholy fears and apprehenſions, but comforts himſelf at laſt with the remembrance of what God had formerly done for them. *I will remember*, ſays he, *the years of the right hand of the moſt high—I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember the wonders of old.* † This is not the firſt dark cloud that has hung over our publick affairs, and God has extricated us out of our difficulties, and reſcued our liberties from the danger which threatened their entire ſubverſion. And as it is God that governs the world and orders events, and not we; let us in our preſent circumſtances imitate David's pious truſt and confidence

‖ Pſalm lxxviii. 7. * 2d Cor. i. 10. † Pſalm lxxvii. 10, 11. in

in God, when his affairs were greatly embarraſſed—*My ſoul truſteth in thee; yea in the ſhadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until theſe calamities be overpaſt.* ‡

FOURTHLY, The inſtances of God's providential goodneſs to Britain and America, of antient and later date, ſhould be ſo commemorated by us, as to tranſmit to poſterity the *praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength* appearing in *the wonderful works that he hath done.* This is a debt which every age owes to poſterity. Our anceſtors have conveyed to us the knowledge of God's works of wonder, which he did in their days. And the ſame paternal regard to poſterity, will engage us to tranſmit the knowledge of theſe, and the remarkable paſſages of his favourable providence in our own days, to the next generation, and they to their children—And thus *one generation ſhall praiſe his works to another, and declare his mighty acts—The fathers to the children ſhall make known his truth—For the Lord hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compaſſion.*

FIFTHLY, Let the recollection of God's mighty acts of power and mercy in the days of old, not only engage us to hope and truſt in him in ſucceeding times; but alſo to labour after conformity to his will in all things.

SPECIAL favours lay us under ſpecial obligations, as well to the duties of piety and charity, as to thoſe of praiſe and thankſgiving. Theſe well become a people for whom as well as for their progenitors, God hath done ſo great things. We have reaſon to be jealous and afraid, leſt we abuſe the favours of heaven, and the Lord be provoked after he hath done us good, to execute his threatenings, and viſit us with redoubled ſtrokes of his vengeance.—Nothing but wickedneſs can deprive us of God's benefits, and make us miſerable. And what an overflowing deluge have we in view, tending to ſubvert our religion, and our civil ſtate together. May *the ſpirit of the Lord lift up a ſtandard againſt* this great enemy of mankind; and be as a purifying flame to burn up our filthineſs, and enkindle

‡ Pſalm lvii. 1.

enkindle in us that divine love, which would make *us zealous of good works.*

We ſhall be guilty of the blackeſt ingratitude, if after all the ſeaſonable interpoſitions of providence in our favour, which we *have heard and known, and our fathers have told us*, we do not ingenuouſly enquire, *what we ſhall render to the Lord for all his benefits.* And what ſhall we render—O let us render our active love and gratitude, and our conſtant ſervices to the cauſe and people of God. If we would ſet our hope in God, we muſt *keep his commandments*; and the piety, righteouſneſs and charity of our future lives, muſt prove the ſincerity of our preſent verbal acknowledgements, of his perfections and bounties.

But 'tis time to draw to a cloſe.

God has in the year paſt given us many teſtimonies of his providential goodneſs. He has continued peace in our borders, and the voice of health in moſt of our dwellings, and given us occaſion to *rejoice with the joy of harveſt.* But we have not theſe witneſſes alone of his preſence, his power, and his goodneſs. For he who once left the nations to *go on in their own ways*, hath now revealed to us the path of ſalvation, and given us that *true bread from heaven, of which if a man eat he ſhall live forever.* Thro' the good hand of our God upon us, we ſtill enjoy the liberty of worſhipping the *God of our fathers*, after their example, and according to our conſciences. Let us recognize the providence of heaven on this occaſion—This is a juſt debt to heaven—'Tis all we can poſſibly pay, and 'tis the leaſt that will poſſibly do.—Thanks be to God who has given us his word as to his Jacob, and his ſtatutes and judgments as to his Iſrael. *Praiſe* the Lord, O New-England, who *hath bleſſed us with ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt.*

RETURN, we beſeech thee, O God of hoſts, look down from heaven and behold, and viſit this American *vine, and the vineyard which thine own right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madeſt ſtrong for thyſelf—Let thine hand*

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be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the ſon of man whom thou haſt made ſtrong for thyſelf—So will we not go back from thee; quicken us and we will call upon thy name.

LET us conclude this ſacred ſolemnity, like the pious, loyal, and patriotic Iſraelites; in praying that the bleſſing of God Almighty may be with our King, and in devout and humble acknowledgments of divine favours. *And they bleſſed the King, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodneſs that the Lord had done for David his ſervant, and for Iſrael his people.*

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